

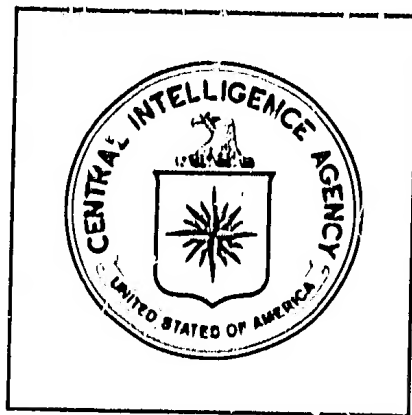
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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Soviets Meet with
Syrian Foreign Minister

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam's visit to the USSR last week marked a continuation of Moscow's efforts to prepare for a resumption of the Geneva conference.

The communique issued at the end of the visit, however, left unclear whether the Soviets were able to make substantial progress on Geneva with the Syrians, particularly over the issue of PLO representation. The Syrians have been strong advocates of early participation at Geneva by an independent Palestine Liberation Organization delegation. Although the Soviets have supported the "equal" participation of PLO representatives, they have been ambiguous about the timing of Palestinian attendance and have kept open the possibility that the PLO will become part of another delegation.

The Palestinian issue will be discussed during the visit to Moscow of a PLO delegation headed by Yasir Arafat, which began yesterday. In addition, Gromyko is apparently planning a trip to the Middle East next month to continue discussions on Geneva.

The Syrian-Soviet communique was markedly warmer on bilateral issues than the one issued after Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi's visit last week. In what may be an effort to signal their continued displeasure with Cairo, the Soviets once again stated their commitment to building Syrian military strength and praised Syria's political policies.

The four-day trip to Damascus by Soviet Chief of Staff Kulikov--which coincided with Khaddam's

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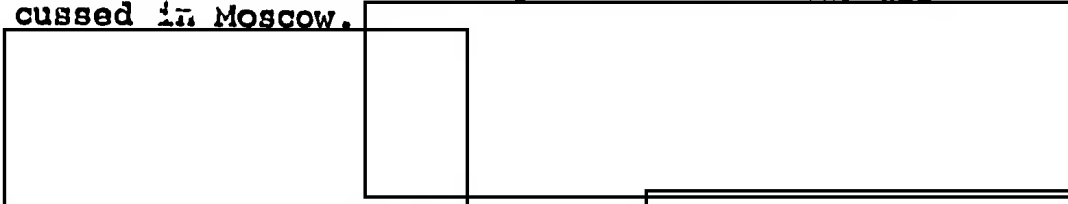
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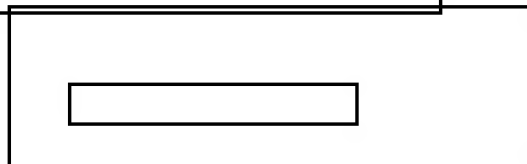
stay in Moscow--may have been designed to underscore continuing Soviet military support at a time when Moscow was pressing Khaddam on Geneva. Kulikov met with President Asad and Syrian military leaders and probably checked on how Damascus is employing Moscow's substantial military aid.

It is likely that Syria's dispute with Iraq over the waters of the Euphrates River was discussed in Moscow.



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Soviets Speak Up Against the Hegemony
Clause in Japan-China Treaty

The Soviets have inveighed against the prospective Japan-China peace and friendship treaty with signed commentaries in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. Moscow seems reconciled to the conclusion of a treaty, but it is trying to stiffen Japanese opposition to the inclusion of a reference to "anti-hegemony" that is patently directed at the Soviets.

The commentaries are tough on the Chinese and --given the fact that Moscow would prefer that Tokyo not sign any treaty with China until it is willing to sign one with the USSR--relatively easy on the Japanese. The Soviets charge that Chinese leaders have admitted that the Soviet Union is the target of the hegemony language, and that Peking's purpose is to cover its own designs and to drive a wedge between the USSR and Japan. The commentaries praise Japanese leaders who are sensitive to the real purposes of the Chinese and are resisting the hegemony language in the treaty.

The timing and tone of these commentaries suggest that Moscow sees some hope that Tokyo will be able at least to water down the treaty's language. The Soviets probably believe, with some justification, that their strong representations in Tokyo against the treaty have caused the Japanese to take a tougher stand in the talks than they would have otherwise. Even if Tokyo capitulates, the Soviets would have helped create a controversial issue between the two countries and would have the Japanese on the defensive when they deal with Moscow. The Soviets might also press the Japanese to make amends by supporting Moscow's Asian security concept, which the Soviets will probably dust off before very long as their contribution to the political adjustments under way in East Asia.

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Defense Minister Grechko, in an article appearing in the March 1975 issue of *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, attempts to clarify four major contradictions the Soviets face in trying to project their version of the causes and the course of World War II. While it breaks little new ground, the article is the most detailed and authoritative statement of its type to emerge during the publicity for the "Great Thirtieth" celebrations. The four contradictions are: 1) the wartime alliance with the Western imperialist powers, 2) the non-aggression pact with Germany, 3) the repression and privation of the 1930s in the USSR, and 4) the Soviet role in the war against Japan.

Grechko grapples first with the complex problem of explaining how imperialism could be at once the enemy and the ally of the Soviet Union. He explains this in standard class terms: the "people" sided with the Soviets, while the exploiters were for the Germans. The ruling circles of the imperialist powers, he writes, saw German fascism as their class ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union. "However complex and contradictory international relations in the capitalist world were in the 1930s," he continues, "it remains an indisputable fact that other imperialist powers, directly or indirectly, invested effort and money in the preparation of aggression against the USSR and the creation of the German fascist army." The policy of appeasement practiced by the imperialists served the same end, he claims. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was doing all it could to avert war and was trying to arrange an international alliance against Germany. These overtures were rebuffed, however, because the imperialists saw socialism, not fascism, as their main enemy. When the Western powers' calculated attempts to direct Germany's

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aggression against the USSR failed and they found themselves instead victims of the German army, they were unable to offer effective resistance and fell one by one to Hitler's forces. This gave Germany the economic base from which to launch an attack against the Soviet Union--the primary target all along--and the Soviet Union and the Western powers became allies.

Grechko then attempts a detailed explanation of the need for the repression and privation in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, a need which he asserts was directly related to war preparations. Bearing in mind Lenin's dictum about being encircled by hostile forces, the Soviet Union was aware of the risk of war and took the necessary measures during the prewar period to build up an economic, military, moral, and political base of defense. Soviet domestic policy of the 1930s--collectivization, liquidation of the exploiting classes, the uniting of the disparate nationalities of the USSR and other measures--were directed to this end and made it possible for the USSR to embark on a fundamental technical restructuring of the Soviet armed forces and their armament.

This process, Grechko explains, took time, and it was therefore necessary to try to delay the start of a war that was becoming "increasingly inevitable." In this situation, the only recourse was to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany, which gave the USSR two vital years to build up the country's defenses.

Grechko addresses himself to the fourth contradiction, the Soviet role in the war against Japan, in terms somewhat more straightforward than previous Soviet statements, including his own. He notes that the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan only in August 1945, and he does not make the

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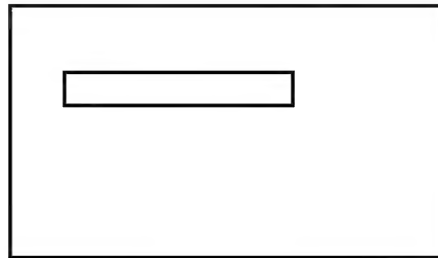
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usual claim that the Soviet Union defeated militarist Japan. He does, however, ignore the US-Japanese war in the Pacific, saying only that the Soviet army and the Mongolians defeated the Japanese Kwangtung army. In an ambiguous formulation, he states that the Soviets estimate "at their true worth" the contributions of the peoples of the USA, Great Britain, France, Canada and other countries who fought the Germans.

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Nominations of Leaders to
Republic Supreme Soviets

The results of the first day of nominations of candidates for election to republic Supreme Soviets were published by *Pravda* on April 25. The ranking of Politburo members according to number of nominating districts indicates little change in status following the Central Committee plenum that dropped Shelepin from the leadership. Brezhnev leads with nominations from 16 electoral districts. Podgorny and Kosygin are tied for second place with 10; Suslov and Kirilenko have three each; and the other leaders all have one.

The distance between Brezhnev's score and that of Podgorny and Kosygin is not quite as great as in *Pravda's* first day of reporting on last year's nominations to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Nevertheless, coverage of Brezhnev's candidacy overwhelms all others. Pictures of meetings in electoral districts carried by all central newspapers but one show only Brezhnev's portrait being held up by enthusiastic supporters. (The Moscow Oblast paper shows Brezhnev's portrait out in front, flanked by those of Podgorny and Kosygin.) Brezhnev's name appears first in the accounts of meetings in each republic.

Nominations of top leaders are honorary in all cases but one. The ratio established by *Pravda* on its first day of reporting is generally maintained throughout the nomination campaign. The central and republic press will continue to publish reports of these honorary nominations during the next couple of weeks. Election day is June 15.

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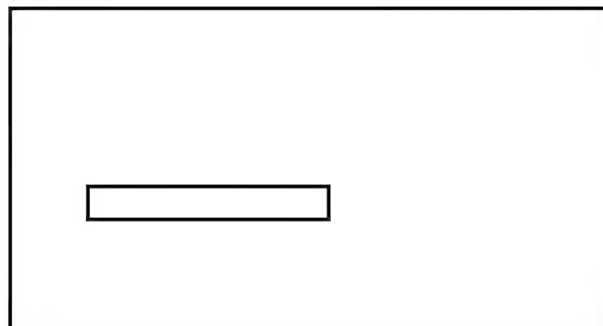
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Following is a tabulation of the number of district nominations for each leader as initially reported by *Pravda* this year and last year:

	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
Brezhnev	21	16
Kosygin	11	10
Podgorny	11	10
Suslov	4	3
Kirilenko	4	3
Andropov	2	1
Grechko	2	1
Gromyko	2	1
Grishin	2	1
Kulakov	2	1
Kunayev	2	1
Mazurov	2	1
Pelshe	2	1
Polyansky	2	1
Shcherbitsky	2	1
Shelepin	2	

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